

Japan America Society of Minnesota



通 信

The Tsūshin is a membership publication of the Japan America Society of Minnesota

September 2023 Vol. 32, No. 9

Recap: Obon Festival 2023



Thank you everyone for another great Obon Festival! The highly anticipated Obon Festival has come to an end. On August 20 approximately 8,300 attendees gathered at Como Park in order to celebrate one of the largest summer festivals of Japan, the Obon Matsuri.

During the Obon Festival, Como Park became a bustling hub of excitement filled with memorable booths, demonstrations, shopping items, activities, and food. In terms of activities, JASM's own Yo-Yo Tsuru booth proved to be an irresistible activity for many event goers. The colorful bouncy water yo-yos kept kids entertained for hours.

Meanwhile, JASM's Kingyo Sukui (rubber duck scooping) booth was also very successful.

At the J-Quiz booth, participants answered Japan-related trivia in a mock version of the J-Quiz program using Kahoot. Last but not least, the most successful JASM booth this year, besides the Main booth, was the calligraphy booth. The participants had the option of learning how to write something in Japanese or having something written for them by a calligraphy master. For the first time, the participants had the opportunity to ask the masters to brush on folding fans.



Numerous events took place throughout the day besides the booths such as bon odori dancing, taiko drumming from MN and Japan, Kendama and koto performance, and martial arts

demonstrations. But the night was not complete without the lantern-lighting ceremony. Derived from Buddhist traditions, people let the lit lantern float as a means to pay homage to one's ancestors who are leaving us. The beautiful sight of the countless lit lanterns on the water was unforgettable.

Thank you to all those who came to the festival and stopped by the JASM booths and made this event another success (please read page 7). Finally, we would like to thank the Japan Foundation for their contributions in funding the festival.



JAPAN FOUNDATION



Mondale Scholarship Recipients 2023-2024

The Mondale Scholarship is given every year by JASM to support undergraduate students enrolled in Minnesota colleges, the University of North Dakota, or North Dakota State University, who are planning to study abroad in order to expand their knowledge of Japan. This award is named for Minnesota's own Walter Mondale, a former US Ambassador to Japan as well as former Vice President and Senator.

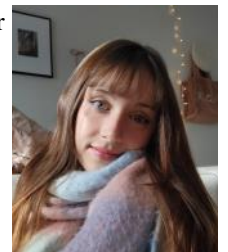
We are pleased to announce the recipients of the 2023-2024 Mondale Scholarship. This year the Mondale Scholarship Selection Committee chose three recipients. Congratulations!



My name is **Rachel Kelly** and I am a junior at Macalester College. I will be attending Kansai Gaidai University in Hirakata City for my study abroad this spring. I am extremely excited to have the opportunity to explore Japanese language and culture while learning about different identities in Japan.

Rachel Kelly

My name is **Livvy Peters** and I am a junior at Macalester College. I will be attending Kansai Gaidai University for the Asian Studies Program in Hirakata City for my study abroad this fall semester. I'm very excited to have the opportunity to explore my interest in Japanese art history, meet new people, and develop my language skills during my study away experience!



Livvy Peters



My name is **Kendra Martin**, and I am a junior at the University of Minnesota. I will be attending the CET Japan program in Osaka for my study abroad this fall. I am very excited to dive into this language-intensive program and acquaint myself with the culture first-hand, all while gaining the invaluable experience of speaking and communicating with the locals of the Kansai region.

Kendra Martin



Please join us for the **Mondale Award Scholarship Gala 2023 on Saturday, November 4th at the Oak Ridge Country Club in Hopkins** and support students in Minnesota who plan to study in Japan 2023-2024!



Meet Our Board Member: Peter Hill



In 1975, I was adopted by Sandy and Mary Hill at the age of 12 and grew up in South Minneapolis. After graduating from Macalester College in 1985, my strong interest in Asian culture, especially Japanese culture, led me to Miyagi University of

Education, where I completed a study abroad program during college and completed a two-year intensive Japanese studies program. I passed Level One Nihongo Noryoku Shiken in 1989. In 1990, I joined a Japan/US joint venture company in Tokyo as a part of their Japan sales team while supporting the distribution businesses in Korea, Taiwan, and SEA.

Over the years, my international business career led me to work and live in Japan, Korea, and China for over 17 years while taking on various management positions in sales/marketing and subsidiary operations. I established an Asian-business consulting company in 2015 to serve medium-sized US/Asian manufacturing companies looking to expand their business overseas.

I became a member of JASM in 2016 and continued participating in JASM-sponsored events after returning to the Twin Cities from Asia in 2018. I was fortunate enough to be asked to join the JASM board in 2022. My key initiative as a board member is to support JASM's Executive Director in growing the Organization memberships.

JASM offers numerous exciting Japan-related cultural events, and individual participants have grown exponentially since the reopening after the COVID lockdown. In addition to providing Japanese culture/customs-related experiences, JASM supports organization members with business networking that connects governmental organizations such as JETRO (Japan External Trade Organization), the Department of Commerce, the Consul General of Japan, and the Minnesota Trade Office, as well as various industry personnel through 38 Japan America societies across the US with a membership totaling over 10,000.

Thanks to connections with Asian-business consulting partners, JASM assists with training and supporting them in proper Japanese business etiquette, cross-cultural nuance tailored to the organization's needs and requirements, and business mediation support between US and Japanese organizations with vendors, partners, and customers.

I invite organizations interested in joining the JASM network and want to take advantage of other business-related offerings by signing up for JASM's organization membership and participating in JASM's cultural events!

Peter Hill, JASM Board Member

Upcoming: 2023 JASM Charity Golf Scramble



JASM will be holding our 3rd annual charity golf scramble event on **Saturday, September 23** at **Pioneer Creek Golf Course** in Maple Plain, MN. Enjoy a fun day of competition with friends while supporting JASM. This event is limited to 72 participants.

Registration fee:

From August 24 to September 16

\$115: Non-member, \$100: Member



Please click [here](#) to register or scan the QR code.

For further information, please contact:

Tom Haeg, 612-940-3351 tomhaeg@msn.com

Marc Blehert, 763-280-2108 mblehert@yahoo.com

Membership News (7/21 – 8/20, 2023)

Thanks to the following new JASM members:

Peter Dyste, Josh Fortin, David Johnson,
James, Lo, Ann McCarthy, Alexander Roe,
Jeremiah Rushing, Jim Suel, Rebecca Thayer,
Emily Ueki

Thanks to the following renewing JASM members:

William Deef, Jeffrey DuBois, William French,
Seikei Hibino, Noriko Ishida, Sachiya Isomura,
Daniel Johnson, Katrina Little, Misty Lutz,
Jan Magree, Joseph Montgomery, Hiroko Nagai,
Susie Osaki Holm, Ryan and Chieko Rogers,
Daniel Rolf, Kelly Rynda, Yoshio and Naomi Satoh,
David and Olivia Smith, Kay Thomas,
Sanae Tomita, Frances VanDorn

Thanks to the following Corporate Members:

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Report From a Mondale Scholarship Recipient 2022-2023: Joshua Marine



Joshua (left) and Marcus McKee (right) wearing kendō (剣道) training clothes, composed of a keikogi (稽古着) top and a hakama (袴) bottom. One of the professors also brought in some practice swords and gloves for them to try!

My name is Josh Marine and I am one of the recipients of the JASM Mondale Scholarship. I studied abroad in Osaka through CET: Japan for the fall semester of my senior year at Macalester College, and I am currently taking a gap year to save up money and get work experience.

Looking back at my study abroad experience, three months was a good chunk of time in which I was able to explore many different areas of Japan and immerse myself in my environment. I was able to engage with activities that facilitated an accelerated cultural and linguistic learning environment unique to living in Japan simply by pursuing what was fun to me. I selected the three

images here as they look at three aspects of my experience: traveling to explore Japan outside of my program area (*shimanami kaidō*), regular activities I enjoyed that also naturally facilitated learning via the environment (BoulderingGym HAGO), and experiences provided through class or program activities (*kendō*). I also traveled to *Kyūshū* for a few days, played in the tennis club at my program university, and had a blast on our program trip to Fukui. Having all three of these kinds of experiences made my experience regularly fun, engaging, and exciting with novelty.

While the experience felt like it shot by at the end, I believe I was able to make the most of my time there. The Mondale Scholarship allowed me to do things like travel on the bullet train to *Beppu*, a location in *Kyūshū* famous for their *onsen*, along with purchase unique items like a handcrafted knife that I use now when cooking. Japan is known for things like its beautiful nature, delicious food, and precision craftsmanship. While public transportation and eating out in Japan are quite affordable, a lot of the costs will add up, especially if you are optimizing your time there.



Joshua (right), Chris Taylor (left), and the gym owner of BoulderingGym Hago in Osaka Hamada Ryō (middle) posing for a picture on their last day climbing there.

language and culture so much. The study abroad experience is a powerful one, and something I would recommend to just about anyone that has the opportunity.



Joshua in front of one of the many bridges along the beautiful shimanami kaidō (しまなみ海道) expressway connecting honshū and shikoku. A 10/10 would recommend experience for anyone in Japan that enjoys good views and biking with friends!

I am so grateful to both my program CET: Japan and JASM for giving me the opportunity to study abroad in Japan with extra monetary freedom. I was surrounded with fellow study abroad students motivated to both get out and enjoy Japan and significantly improve their language skills. I still keep in touch with some of them and definitely plan to return to Japan at some point. I find myself envious of those younger than me still in high school or college that have the opportunity to study abroad in structured environments like these. I came back to America and felt more motivated than ever to improve my Japanese. I started engaging more linguistically with forms of Japanese entertainment that I had already enjoyed such as music, anime, manga, and YouTube as well as becoming a Japanese tutor for my last semester. I majored in Physics along with Japanese, but have found myself pulled towards jobs and opportunities that involve Japanese simply because I enjoy engaging with the

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with your support!*

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Joshua Marine, Mondale Scholarship Recipient 2022-2023

Report From a Mondale Scholarship Recipient 2022-2023: Chong Sarah Thao

My name is Chong Sarah Thao and I am studying Psychology, Japanese and Asian Studies at St. Olaf College. During my 6-month study abroad in Japan I studied at Waseda University (早稲田大学) in Tokyo, Japan.

Initially, I had set out to study abroad for a year at Waseda and was accepted, but with a tight budget and being a first-time traveler, I realized I just wasn't ready to go for a full year and almost gave up. I was still holding onto my hopes of traveling by applying for scholarships and continuing to save so that I was able to go for a semester instead of a year. After weeks of anticipation, I was accepted for the Mondale scholarship, which lifted a financial burden off of my shoulders. This allowed me to take a deep breath and focus on how I could spend my time in Japan.

On the morning of my departure, I said my goodbyes at 6 am to my mother and sister who took me to the airport. Until I landed in Japan it was still hard to believe that I had finally made it across the world to a place where I felt I barely knew the language. But to my surprise I was better at communicating than I thought and through my program - Japan Study - I was able to settle into everything smoothly and meet new friends.

Soon after, I was united with my amazing host family, the Miyazawa's, and lived with them in a city called Higashimurayama in Tokyo. By spending time with my host family I learned a lot more about the daily lives of Japanese households and got to try new foods such as New year's food (おせち料理), Nabe, Udon and many more. My host family has been nothing but loving and open to me, always teaching me new things and making sure I could experience a lot in my time with them which I will forever be grateful for.

I also met many acquaintances and friends along the way, most from Japan Study, whom I've created many fond memories with. My most memorable trip while in Japan was a spontaneous trip to Kyoto with a group of 7 friends from

Japan Study. On this trip, we visited many temples and shrines such as Fushimi Inari, Yasaka, Kinkaku-ji, and many more. During the many temple visits, I came across the amazing architecture of each building and statute as well as the depth of the history of Japan's religion. I was also able to appreciate the beauty of nature, especially in visiting the Tenryuji Temple, Nara deer park, and Arashiyama Bamboo forest. Along the busy shopping streets, shops sold small trinkets, snacks and other goods that were perfect for omiyage - which I made sure to buy on my return back to my host family.



Sarah and fellow study abroad students traveling around Kyoto

My reasons for wanting to go to Japan had stemmed from my childhood of growing up surrounded by Japanese media, making me interested in going to Japan just to travel and later turned into me wanting to learn about the culture and speak the language. In the amazing experiences abroad, I've found myself to be more adventurous and independent through traveling and trying new things, things I wouldn't have been able to do if I wasn't able to get the Mondale scholarship and other financial aid. I definitely plan to go back to Japan in the future to reunite with my host family, explore new places and revisit old ones while continuing to make great memories.

Chong Sarah Thao, Mondale Scholarship Recipient 2022-2023

Report From a Mondale Scholarship Recipient 2022-2023: Aly Hayashi



Aly and her friends playing with sparklers at the park.

Hi! My name is Aly Hayashi and this past spring, I studied abroad at Kansai Gaidai University in Hirakata, Japan. From a young age, I knew I wanted to study abroad in Japan to learn more about my Japanese

heritage. I took this opportunity abroad to travel to Hiroshima, where my family is from, as well as various

places within Japan from Sapporo to Okinawa.

Over a hundred years ago, my family immigrated from Hiroshima to Hawaii. I took the opportunity of being in Japan to visit Hiroshima and Miyajima. Though this was a short weekend trip, I was able to see some historic sites in the area as well as visit the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. It was interesting to be in the area where my family originated from. While it has changed drastically since then, it was still meaningful for me to go to Hiroshima and learn about my roots. I had seen pictures of the area that my grandma had shown me from her grandparents but it was different being there in person. The city has so much history and I was happy to learn more about it.

... continued on page 5.

Report From a Mondale Scholarship Recipient 2022-2023: Aly Hayashih *continues...*

In addition to visiting Hiroshima, I visited various other places within Japan but one of my favorite trips I took during the semester was to Sapporo. This was a weekend trip I planned with my friends before arriving in Japan as I knew I wanted to visit during the Sapporo Snow Festival. I had heard so much about it from other students who had gone abroad and wanted to experience it for myself. The snow and ice sculptures were huge and had so many intricate details that I was not expecting. Though I was only there for 2.5 days, we were able to eat many regional foods such as *jingisukan*, soup curry, and Sapporo ramen.



Aly and her friends at the Sapporo Snow Festival

Living in the dormitory was something that made moving to Japan a lot more comfortable for me. Everyone was divided up into units which were comprised of the people you lived near. I became very close with my unit and we often went out together whether it was to dinner, the convenience store for a snack, or a day trip to Osaka or Kyoto. One of my favorite memories with my unit was going to see *sakura* at the end of March. Together, we journeyed from our dorm to Yodogawa, stopping at 7-Eleven to get snacks, and had a picnic under the beautiful flowers. We walked around the park, got lemonade from a food stand, and even took a little boat down a section of the river to be fully immersed in the moment.

Becoming friends with so many people from all over the world who lived so close to me was so fun and I'm so grateful that I had the opportunity to get to know people from so many different backgrounds. Though we are all from different places, we are planning a reunion in Japan sometime soon so we can all see each other again.



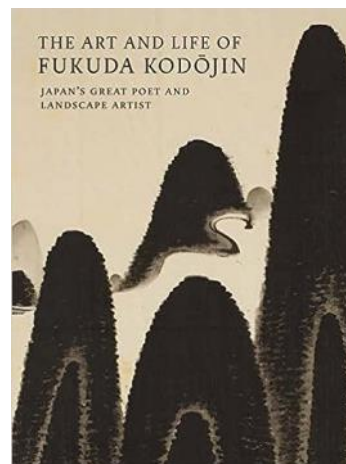
Having a picnic at the park with Aly's unit friends under the sakura

Thank you so much to JASM and the Mondale Scholarship for supporting me throughout my time abroad. I am so grateful for the opportunities the scholarship provided me and I hope I will be able to return to Japan very soon. My experience abroad has connected me to my culture more and created new friendships and relationships with people from around the world.

Aly Hayashi, Mondale Scholarship Recipient 2022-2023

Tom Haeg's Book Review

The Art and Life of Fukuda Kodojin; Tuttle Publishers, 2023; \$39.95, 344 pages.



The Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia) recently concluded a three-month exhibition of Fukuda Kodojin's (1865-1944) art masterpieces, the first ever outside Japan. Who better than Mia since they are the largest custodian of Kodojin's artwork in the world, amassing 63 paintings including folding screens, albums, scrolls and calligraphies. Right here in our backyard, too.

Art critics have typecast Fukuda in the tradition of Japanese literati painting known as *nanga* (or *wenrehua* depicting Chinese landscapes). And this is fair. He nuanced a personal style often depicting bizarre mountain formations captured in monochrome. While some labeled him non-mainstream, he was surprisingly accepted in his time among the political establishment and commercial enterprises. For example, in 1929, an incumbent Japanese prime minister founded the prestigious Kodojin Society (Kodojinkai) to honor him. Then, the giant Tokyo department store Misukoshi had a separate aisle displaying his masterpieces for sale. "Fourth Floor: maternity wear, cosmetics, ...Kodojin art!"

But to simply say he was non-mainstream is misleading. What artist isn't? Let's be fair: within Japan his lifestyle teetered as a recluse or Bohemian artist. His extensive library of poetry reveals a sensitivity peculiar to nature and antithetical to the industrialization over-whelming the Japanese population in the first half of the 20th century. Yet some may argue that his work during the War depicts a pro-imperial bias. Very odd. But this increases the intrigue in analyzing his works.

The text is excellent, written by Dr. Andrea Marks, acclaimed curator of Japanese and Korean art at the Mia, which includes an essay by Paul Berry and translations of Kodojin's poems written in Chinese.

Tom Haeg

**Save the Date for Mondale Award and
Scholarship Gala 2023 (in-person)**

**Saturday, November 4th at the Oak Ridge
Country Club in Hopkins.**

Upcoming: Ghibli Park: Encounters with Totoro and Laputa's Robots with Dr. Jeff DuBois (Online)



Ghibli Museum in Mitaka, Tokyo

Please join us for “Ghibli Park: Encounters with Totoro and Laputa’s Robots” with Dr. Jeff DuBois on **Thursday, September 14 at 6:00 p.m.** on Zoom.

Ghibli Park, a theme park devoted to the world of Studio Ghibli, opened in November 2022 to much anticipation. Located within the site of the Aichi World Expo of 2005, Ghibli Park has few of the usual attractions of theme parks such as rollercoasters, performances, or even the high cost of entry tickets. Instead, visitors can inhabit spaces that resemble the world as experienced by the characters of Ghibli movies, whether by visiting Seiji’s violin workshop from *Whisper of the Heart* (*Mimi o Sumaseba*, 1995) or rummaging through Mei and Satsuki’s house from *My Neighbor Totoro* (*Tonari no Totoro*, 1988). This presentation introduces Ghibli Park from the perspective of one of the first Minnesota families to enter the park during the month it opened. It will also give larger context to Studio Ghibli and its history, its Tokyo-based Ghibli Museum, and what it means for Ghibli co-founder Miyazaki Hayao to have just released his final film before retirement.

Ticket Price

\$8 for Non-Member

Free for Member



Register today by clicking here or scan the QR code!

[Please support JASM to continue with our mission and activities.](#)



*Jeff DuBois
in Mei-Satsuki house*

Dr. Jeff DuBois is Associate Professor of Japanese Studies at the College of St. Benedict and St. John’s University. His research and teaching interests include the Japanese emperor, nuclear issues, literature, folklore, film, anime, and language. He has taught Ghibli films extensively in his Anime and Folklore classes, brought groups of students to the Ghibli Museum in Tokyo, and directed a semester-long study abroad program in Tokyo during Fall 2022.

Upcoming: Chirimen and more Fundraiser

Sunday, September 17, 1pm-5pm

Japanese Library

4231 Bloomington Ave. S

Minneapolis, MN 55407

**Open to JASM Members at 12pm
(Please register)**



We have received a generous donation of Chirimen suites and a variety of items from Yukari Tokiwa-san to support JASM. The chirimen suits are one of a kind designed by Hitoshi Tamura of Shisendo. They are gently used, and in very good condition/quality.

Chirimen is a plain-woven silk crêpe made of high twist raw silk yarn. It is a soft fabric that doesn't crease easily, and its signature crimped surface texture (shibo) is what distinguishes chirimen from other silks. Chirimen is a very popular fabric not only in Japan, but all over the world.

Tamura slowed down on his creation lately, so it is becoming difficult to find his work, but you can have it with just a \$50 donation.

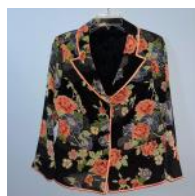
You will receive one piece of chirimen clothing with a \$50 donation. If you would like to have a matching jacket and skirt, you need to donate \$100. [Here is the preview](#) of the items you will see at the fundraiser. This is just a tiny portion of what we have. Please take a look. Nowadays, Tamura’s work is sold for about \$300 a piece or more.

This is a great chance for you to own beautiful chirimen clothes. You can wash them in a washing machine and it does not wrinkle like other fabrics. Please join us for this unique opportunity. Have fun and support JASM!

All of the pieces are in a range of **size 8-12, shoes are size 6 or so.**

Huge thank you to the Japanese Library for letting JASM have this event!

If you are a JASM Member, you can come join us at noon instead of 1pm. Please register.



領事出張サービスのお知らせ (ミネソタ州ブルーミントン市)

This is a message from Consulate General of Japan in Chicago

当館は、10月28日(土曜日)にミネソタ州ブルーミントン市での領事出張サービスを実施する予定です。皆様、是非この機会にご利用ください。領事出張サービスでは基本的にパスポートの交付及び各種証明書の交付のみとなりますが、その他のご相談も受け付けております。ただし、利用をご希望の方は必ず事前に予約をお願いいたします。なお、予約のない場合には、入場をお断りすることがございますので、あらかじめご了承ください。詳細は下記のURLをご参照ください。

<https://www.chicago.us.emb-japan.go.jp/files/100536310.pdf>

当館連絡先

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Email: ryoji1@cg.mofa.go.jp



Thank You for Another Successful Year of Obon Festival!



Thank you to all those who came to the festival and stopped by JASM's booths. Another huge thank you to our wonderful volunteers without whom the JASM booths would not have been functional. JASM would also like to thank Como Park Zoo & Conservatory and St. Paul-Nagasaki Sister City Committee in their organization of the Obon Festival with us

together. Again, we would like to thank the Japan Foundation for their contributions in funding the festival.



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of MINNESOTA

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通信

September Tsūshin
2023

The Japan America Society of Minnesota is a non-profit, non-political association engaged in bringing the peoples of Japan and the United States closer together in mutual understanding, respect, and cooperation. Through programs and interchange, it endeavors to promote an appreciation of cultural, educational, economic, public, and other affairs of interest to both peoples. Membership in the society is open to individuals, corporations, and other organizations interested in furthering its programs.

The Japan America Society of Minnesota is a member of the National Association of Japan-America Societies.

Please report any inaccuracies you find in this publication to jasm@mn-japan.com

Obon Festival 2023

